# Projecting Maoist China: the PRC's transnational film distribution, 1949 to 1966

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In 1957, the US Secretary of State, John Foster Dulles, was shocked at the apparent success of films from the People's Republic of China (PRC) in achieving screenings in Thailand.[1] These PRC films probably included the Ping opera film *Madam Qin Xianglian*/*Qin Xianglian* (1955), which through personal connections had been shown in 1956 at a charity event in the Thai Navy Military Headquarters, reportedly receiving an enthusiastic reception.[2] On 1 May 1957, the US Ambassador to Thailand, Max Waldo Bishop, reported a 'secret' arrangement for the departure of around 40 members of a Thai cultural troupe to the PRC via Hong Kong, under the leadership of the well-known, pro-communist writer and playwright Suwat Woradilok.[3] Both the US State Department and the American embassy in Thailand found this disturbing, given both America's well-known position towards the PRC and its frequent attempts to keep the Thai government informed of their policies. The Department thought an evolution of Thai policy towards allowing the screening of PRC films would counteract American efforts to reverse the neutralist trend of some of Thailand's neighbours.[4]

On 16 May 1957, the Thai Ambassador in the USA called the US State Department, at its request. Assistant Secretary Robertson informed him that the USA was worried about a series of provocative events in Thailand, including the semi-official sponsored screening of PRC films, and visits by Thai trade and cultural groups to the PRC. Robertson commented that the subversive propaganda of the PRC films screened in

1 From Dulles, Department of State, to Amembassy Bangkok, 25 January 1957, RG 59, CDF 1955–59, Box 2264, Folder 593.91/1-655, held in US National Archives at College Park (hereafter NACP).

2 Dunle Xu, *Kenguang tuoying* (My days in the Southern Film Corporation) (Hong Kong: MCCM Creations, 2005), p. 59. Unless otherwise indicated, all translations are my own.

3 From Bishop, Bangkok to Secretary of State, 1 May 1957, RG 59, CDF 1955–59, Box 2263, Folder 591.93/1-955, NACP.

4 From Dulles, Department of State to Amembassy Bangkok, 9 May 1957, RG 59, CDF 1955–59, Box 2263, Folder 591.93/1-955, NACP.


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Thailand threatened the country's stability. The Thai ambassador subsequently requested the names of these films, and the theatres in which they had been released.[5] On 23 May, American embassy officials met the Thai prime minister and presented concerns similar to those expressed by Robertson,[6] but PRC film screenings nevertheless continued in Thailand throughout 1957. Despite American reservations and the assurances of the Thai Foreign Office and Ministry of the Interior that they would withdraw the PRC propaganda films from public theatres,[7] Bishop found that the Thai government had neither withdrawn them nor made public its intention to prohibit their screening.[8] The PRC films shown included not only cultural, soft-line releases such as *Nandao fengyun*/*Wind and Cloud over South Island* (1955), but also those that the USA viewed as incendiary, such as *Baimao nü*/*The White-Haired Girl* (1950).[9] One leader from the Southern Film Corporation (SFC), a branch of the PRC Film Distribution Company,[10] confirmed that following the positive reception of *Madam Qin Xianglian*, most PRC opera films and features, and some PRC documentary titles, were able to obtain permission for public exhibition in Thailand.[11]

This case study demonstrates the PRC's struggle with the USA in the late 1950s over bordering its film territories in relation to non-socialist countries,[12] and offers clues to the pattern of PRC film events held in those countries. Based primarily on archives in Shanghai and the USA, my essay considers PRC film distribution abroad as a state project designed to achieve international visibility in the Maoist era, and reveals the topography of its film flow, particularly to non-socialist countries. The latter has until now been neglected by existing scholarship. Being dependent on the open access period of government archives, my research focuses on the period between the founding of the PRC in 1949 and the start of the Cultural Revolution in 1966. I argue that mapping this film flow not only offers a geographical and temporal extension of existing conceptualizations of 'world cinema' history, but also provides a different perspective, navigation and understanding of the cinematic world that can be incorporated into an otherwise Eurocentric and western art-film-focused 'atlas of world cinema'.[13] PRC film export strategies involved the state in probing, organizing and maintaining boundaries for distribution and exhibition within and across socialist blocs, with the aim of achieving international visibility for the new China and affecting its relations with other nations. My essay discusses forces that contributed to the territorialization of PRC film dispersal and their topographical configuration, and considers whether the PRC's political and cultural advantages increased with the expansion of the distribution of its films in the 1950s and 1960s.

While film scholars have investigated the cultural Cold War and the PRC's film engagements, they have primarily addressed the exchanges between socialist countries, the third world of the time,[14] and Chinese communities in Hong Kong (HK) and Southeast Asian (SEA) countries.[15] Of the two dominant approaches to these engagements, the

5 From Department of State to Amembassy, Bangkok, 17 May 1957, RG 59, CDF 1955–59, Box 2263, Folder 591.93/1-955, NACP.

6 From Bishop, Bangkok to Secretary of State, 24 May 1957, RG 59, CDF 1955–59, Box 2263, Folder 591.93/1-955, NACP.

7 From Dulles, Department of State to Amembassy Bangkok, 2 July 1957, RG 59, CDF 1955–59, Box 2264, Folder 593.91/1-655, NACP.

8 From Bishop, Bangkok to Secretary of State, 5 July 1957, RG 59, CDF 1955–59, Box 2264, Folder 593.91/1-655, NACP.

9 From Bishop, Bangkok to Secretary of State, 20 July 1957, RG 59, CDF 1955–59, Box 2264, Folder 593.91/1-655, NACP.

10 During the Cold War era, the SFC operated nominally as a Hong Kong business organization but was actually a branch of the PRC's China Film Distribution Company. For a detailed history of the SFC, see Lanjun Xu, 'The Southern Film Corporation, opera films, and the PRC's cultural diplomacy in Cold War Asia, 1950s and 1960s', *Modern Chinese Literature and Culture*, vol. 29, no. 1 (2017), pp. 246–47.

11 Dunle Xu, *Kenguang tuoying*, p. 59.

12 Despite fully acknowledging the political implications of PRC's film project there, the USA could not forestall it, nor prevent the realization of its political agenda. But this tug of war was not final. After the coup staged by the Thai army in September 1957, Thailand's relations with the USA became closer. Meanwhile the PRC and Thailand antagonized each other from then until 1969. Thailand also banned PRC films from October 1958. See PRC Film Workers Friendship Association, 'Woguo dianying zai haiwai de yixie qingkuang' (The PRC films' distribution abroad), April 1960, B177-3-197-12, Shanghai Archives (hereafter SA).

13 In addressing world cinema, Dudley Andrew proposed the concept of 'an atlas of world cinema', with each map 'providing a different orientation to unfamiliar terrain' and opening up 'a continent to successive



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views: political, demographic, linguistic, topographical, meteorological, marine, historical'. Dudley Andrew, 'An atlas of world cinema', *Framework*, vol. 45, no. 2 (2004), p. 10.

**14** See Tina Mai Chen, 'International film circuits and global imaginaries in the People's Republic of China, 1949–57', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, vol. 3, no. 2 (2009), pp. 149–61; Ran Ma, 'A genealogy of film festivals in the People's Republic of China: "film weeks" during the "Seventeen Years" (1949–1966)', *New Review of Film and Television Studies*, vol. 14, no. 1 (2016), pp. 40–58.

**15** Focusing on Hong Kong and Southeast Asian countries, Xu argues that Chinese opera films, as traditional expressions of local cultural heritage, helped soften the PRC's masculine and military international image and create community bonds among diasporic Chinese populations through regional ties. Lanjun Xu, 'The Southern Film Corporation', pp. 239–82.

**16** Tina Mai Chen, 'International film circuits and global imaginaries', pp. 149–61.

**17** Ran Ma, 'A genealogy of film festivals', pp. 40–58.

former tends to follow the grammar of the realpolitik of geopolitical confrontation and alignment, while the latter imbricates them in the context of the cultural Cold War between mainland China and Taiwan, which aimed to win the hearts and minds of Overseas Chinese communities. A pioneering researcher in this field, Tina Mai Chen, has examined PRC film exports between 1949 and 1957 and categorizes them into two patterns: feature films exported to the USSR and East European countries; and scientific, documentary, and other short films exported to Asian countries such as Burma and Vietnam.[16] The PRC film geographies that Chen draws out from these patterns are, therefore, automatically based on the axis of socialism and informed by the hierarchical structure of the network of socialist states. Ran Ma examines PRC 'film [exhibition] weeks', state-launched foreign film exhibitions that took the form of film festivals, and locates these exhibitions in relation to the PRC's self-positioning within the context of the socialist community and the third world.[17] The PRC's cinematic map, extracted from these studies, only comprises USSR-centred socialist communities with claims to integration into the socialist bloc, before the Sino–USSR split in 1960; China-centred socialist and non-alignment communities with claims to global anti-colonialism, national liberation and peaceful coexistence; and HK-SEA-connected diasporic Chinese communities with claims to national independence and achievements aimed at soliciting patriotic sentiment. Building on this scholarship, I take these ideas further by bridging the currently separated research on film exports and festivals, and exploring the spectrum of film reception within and across socialist and non-socialist countries.

PRC film dispersal in the period under consideration occurred at different levels: the commercial level through film trade; the political level through film festivals and film screenings sponsored by official government agencies of the PRC and host countries; and the cultural and educational level through exhibitions by local friendship associations, communist or leftist organizations and clubs. I examine the commercial film transactions as a medium for global self-exhibition, and the two types of non-commercial film circulation as a means for building an institutional exhibition infrastructure. My essay excavates from the PRC's film distribution its vision of a 'progressive' and leading role in the cinematic world of the time, its strategies of active engagement in film festival institutions, and its interactions and reconciliations with international film institutions, intermediaries and filmgoers around the world. The fluid topographies of film distribution – mediated by ever-changing external relations, domestic political-cultural ecology, international markets and friendship, the diverse spectrum of film reception, and common political sentiment – guaranteed neither a shared taste for film aesthetics nor a similar manner of meaning-making. They furthermore constituted an alternative to the broader geopolitical Cold War imagery and the insular Maoist cultural iconography. I argue that the itinerary and purview of the PRC's film project were not restricted to

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socialist communities, and sometimes even contradicted the parameters of PRC foreign relations and Cold War geopolitics. I also examine how this film project challenges widely circulated paradigm dichotomies – such as national and world, socialist and capitalist – in current film studies.

The territorialization of the PRC's film dispersal was based on the negotiation between its imperative to maximize audiences and the accessibility and confidence of local film markets, which involved political and cultural convergence and divergence between the PRC and target countries. For the PRC government, film distribution and exhibition were, in essence, a matter of political propaganda, domestic ideological education and accumulative profitability abroad, associated with both economic and cultural capital, and aimed at facilitating its political agenda and promoting the nation's cultural image to the world. In 1962, the vice-minister of the PRC's Ministry of Culture, Yan Xia, stated that the easiest way to promote China as a glorious nation to overseas audiences was through PRC films. He believed that film could directly affect and educate audiences in a manner that even Mao's works could not achieve.[18] Film, much like performance art and print, was just one medium that the state could exploit to win the cultural identification and political sympathy of overseas audiences and increase its visibility on the world stage. In the 1950s and 1960s, compared with the extraordinarily discreet treatment of film co-production invitations from other countries, the PRC appeared much more eager to engage in international film distribution and exhibition.

The issue to be adresssed here is through which factors and in which ways the contours of the PRC's film dispersal were formulated in the 1950s and 1960s. PRC film exports were first contextualized within institutionalized external cultural relations and the umbrella of its various corresponding programmes that launched in the 1950s and 1960s. From 1949 onwards, the PRC employed three main methods to establish cultural relations with other countries: 1) signing cultural agreements with Brother Countries (socialist countries that recognized mainland China, including the USSR, seven European countries, North Korea, North Vietnam and Mongolia), and discussing and undertaking annual cultural activities involving both sides based on these agreements; 2) engaging in official and 'people-to-people' (*minjian xing*)[19] cultural relations with the non-socialist countries that recognized mainland China, among which only a few, such as Egypt and Syria, signed cultural agreements with the PRC; 3) engaging in only 'people-to-people' cultural relations with countries that did not recognize mainland China.[20] Between 1949 and 1958, the PRC established cultural relations with 152 countries and regions, including 36 western capitalist countries. Within this group, the China Film Distribution and Exhibition Company (CFD), which was responsible for film trade,[21] established partnerships in 88 countries.[22]

In the 1950s and 1960s, the PRC emphasized developing film industry relations with Asian and African countries, strengthening relations within

18 Yan Xia, 'Xiayan buzhang zai 1962nian 9yue 20ri shanghai dianying ju zhaokai de chuangzuo renyuan zuotanhui shang de jianghua' (Minister Yan Xia's speech at a meeting of Shanghai Film Administration on 20 September 1962), 8 October 1962, B177-1-288, SA.

19 Here, 'people-to-people' cultural relations refers to those cultural exchanges initiated by the Chinese People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries, an organization under the leadership of the CCP and the government.

20 Propaganda Department of the CCP Shanghai Committee, 'Wenhua yishu gongzuo qingkuang zhier' (On cultural and artistic works, part II), August 1959, A22-2-779, SA.

21 Under the leadership of the Ministry of Culture, the CFD took charge of film exports and imports, the translation of Chinese/foreign film scripts and subtitles, the establishment of international film festivals at home and abroad, domestic film distribution and exhibition, providing propagandistic film materials, and collecting audiences' responses to those films exhibited for reference by the Chinese cadres and some related administrations. PRC Film Association (ed.), *Zhongguo dianying nianjian 1981* (Annals of China Movies 1981) (Beijing: China Film Press 1982), p. 491.

22 Lang Pan, 'Youyi, heping he wenhua jiaoliu: renmin zhongguo shinian lai de duiwai wenhua guanxi' (Friendship, peace and cultural communication: the external culture relations of the PRC in the last ten years), *Shijie zhishi*, no. 18 (1959), pp. 13–15.

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the socialist bloc, and trying to gain access to western European and American markets. PRC film export adopted no-cost and late exchange deals at equal rates with socialist countries in the 1950s, but with capitalist countries it adopted three different modes: sale for distribution rights, proxy, and exchange with a price.[23] The Ministry of Culture (MOC) reviewed each film and decided whether and where – Brother Countries, capitalist countries, or both – it would be exported. To navigate local circumstances, the MOC tailored the content of the films to different cultures and political systems, requiring the revision of specific dialogue, commentaries and slogans, as well as the deletion of certain scenes.[24]

The MOC's categorization of target countries for film distribution into Brother and capitalist countries was based on the PRC's diplomatic structure and the corresponding categories in the external cultural relations of the time. Between 1949 and 1956, the PRC exported 115 film copies to 15 capitalist countries and 292 feature film, 112 documentary and 75 short film copies to the USSR and other Brother Countries. The PRC also presented film copies with no commercial purpose to around 60 countries.[25] After the Bandung Conference (the first large-scale Asian-African Conference, held 18–24 April 1955), the PRC increased its contacts with Asian, African and Latin American countries, and launched intensive cultural and propaganda campaigns aimed at overseas audiences. The number of countries and regions importing PRC-produced films increased from 41 in 1957 to 60 in 1958 and 69 in 1959.[26] With growing rifts within the socialist community from the end of the 1950s onwards, the MOC's categorization became increasingly specified by country rather than ideology.

The Southern Film Corporation (SFC) and the CFD branch in Prague explored strategies to facilitate film flow to non-socialist target countries and to navigate local censorship policies. The SFC, a film distribution agency located in Hong Kong and the exclusive importer of PRC films there, took charge of PRC film distribution in Hong Kong, Macau, Cambodia, Indonesia, Singapore, Australia and New Zealand in the 1950s and 1960s. The SFC avoided distributing films that dealt with class struggle and was discreet about sending war films to these regions. In 1959 it distributed around 50 PRC films to these areas, among which war films were the best received but had difficulty passing local censorship rules. Hong Kong only passed war films that dealt with the Second Sino-Japanese War and forbade any films themed around wars against the USA, the Chinese Nationalist Party (KMT) and the Korean War. Cambodia was also hesitant about screening this film genre, and deemed one released film, *Nanzheng beizhan*/*Fighting North and South* (1952), to be encouraging civil unrest, and considered some war film shots as diplomatically sensitive. An image from *Tiedao youji dui*/*Railway Guerrilla* (1956), for example, depicted feet stamping on the Japanese national flag after Japan's surrender, which led to protests from the Japanese Consul in Cambodia.[27]

**23** PRC Film Workers Friendship Association (ed.), *Xin zhongguo de dianying shiye* (The Film Industry of New China), August 1957, B177-3-117-1, SA.

**24** The Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA), the External Cultural Committee and the Commission of Overseas Chinese Affairs of the PRC received carbon copies.

**25** During this period the PRC also organized 19 film weeks for 12 countries at home, which were usually held simultaneously in more than 10 large cities. In 1952 the PRC held a Soviet film month, in which the total audience amounted to around one billion. The 1955 India film week attracted 3,520,000 and the 1955 French film week 2,950,000. PRC Film Workers Friendship Association (ed.), *Xin zhongguo de dianying shiye*.

**26** Enclosed to Despatch from Robert J. Clarke, Public Affairs Officer, USIS Hong Kong to USIA, 20 May 1960: Communist China's Cultural Exchange in 1959, RG 306 Entry P44, Box 3, Folder Hong Kong Incoming Telegrams, NACP.

**27** 'The PRC films' distribution abroad, April 1960', B177-3-197-12, SA.



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The CFD branch in Prague, responsible for the so-called capitalist countries in Europe and America in the 1950s and 1960s, defined its distribution principle as *lenger buduan xishui changliu*, or slim but persistent. In these countries, PRC films had significantly fewer opportunities for public exhibition than in the SFC's target countries. For example, in 1958 and 1959 the branch distributed films to all capitalist countries except Spain and Portugal, including 80 feature-length and 137 short films, but few of these were publicly exhibited. One or two PRC films per year were screened in US theatres, including *Jimao xin*/*Letter with Feathers* (1954) in 1957, *Zhufu*/*New Year Sacrifice* (1956) in 1958 and *Baolian deng*/*The Magic Lotus Lantern* (1959) in 1959. An American distributor bought the 10-year distribution rights to a PRC film as a form of long-term speculation, on the assumption that US–Sino relations might break their impasse in the future. In France the situation was even more restricted, and the Prague branch had not signed any contracts with French distributors. One key reason was the French government's prescribed duty fee for imported films, which was as expensive as 600 or 700 dollars per copy; thus the PRC had to resort to the Franco-Chinese Association for film exhibition on a very small scale.[28] According to Marie-Claire Kuo, the PRC films that had been screened publicly in France by the 1970s included just *Liang Shanbo yu Zhu Yingtai*/*The Butterfly Lovers* (1954), shown in Paris on 27 May 1955; two animation films, *Xiao kedou zhao mama*/*Baby Tadpoles Look for Their Mother* (1960) and *Hongjun qiao*/*The Red Army Bridge* (1964), screened at the Annecy International Animation Film Festival; and a single screening of the first part of *Danao Tiangong*/*The Monkey King* (1961).[29]

The CFD branch in Prague believed that the difficulties facing the large-scale distribution of PRC films in these countries lay in their political film censorship, and that the censors' practices conveyed a prejudiced position towards the political system of socialism. A representative of the Prague branch, Zhimin Li, summarized three general principles found within this film censorship: a ban on references to attacks on countries friendly to the censoring country, and bans on both violence and pornography. However, Li viewed these principles as institutionalized tools that were being used against the PRC, noting that films such as *Yangtse Incident: The Story of HMS Amethyst* (1957), a British war film, passed the censorship requirements, as did some films containing nudity.[30] *Yangtse Incident* centres on the war between the British warship HMS Amethyst and Chinese communist forces in the Yangtze River in 1949. Li's complaints indicate that the censors had exercised unfair political discrimination against PRC war films while allowing some western war films to be shown. This controversy might relate to their different positions and understandings of PRC-produced war films. From the PRC perspective, the representation of conflicts between Chinese communist armed forces and their rivals in PRC war films was designed to glorify their military spirit. To the censors,

**28** Ibid.

**29** Marie-Claire Kuo, 'Translation and distribution of Chinese films in France: a personal account', *Journal of Chinese Cinemas*, vol. 12, no. 3 (2018), pp. 237–49.

**30** 'The PRC films' distribution abroad, April 1960'.



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however, showing such conflicts was deemed to be exacerbating political differences and creating misleading impressions about those involved in the rivalries, particularly western bloc associations such as Taiwan, the USA, Japan and the UK, with derogatory comparisons and offensive attacks. Censorship was deeply connected with diplomatic relations and ideological issues.

The CFD in Prague was happy to make economic concessions for capitalist countries to further its political interests, as well as ideological concessions to further its cultural interests by obtaining minimal access to local film markets. A case in point occurred in 1957, when the vice manager of the CFD, Zang Hong, and a Finnish film company, Adams Filmi Oy, signed a distribution deal for 'film exchange at equal value', in which nine PRC films (two features and seven shorts) would be exchanged for one Finnish film. Although this equal value exchange appeared *unequal*, the PRC embassy and the CFD representatives still viewed it as an economic and political success. How did they calculate the benefit and loss of this film exchange? The PRC believed that the total value of the nine Chinese films, priced at US$8000, was worth the cost. Moreover, gaining an opportunity to exhibit PRC films in Finland was seen as a great advantage, particularly considering that Hollywood films occupied 49% of Finland's film market at the time, and only two PRC films – *The White-Haired Girl* and the documentary *Minjian meishu gongyi*/*Folk Arts and Crafts* (1954) – had been distributed there between 1949 and 1956.[31] In 1957 the average cost of a full-colour Chinese film was ¥350,000 (approximately US$142,276), and the average cost of a black-and-white Chinese film was ¥190,000 (approximately US$77,236).[32] Thus, in reality, the exchange of the colour film *New Year Sacrifice* and the black-and-white film *Gege he meimei*/*Brother and Sister* (1956) was not based on equal value. *New Year Sacrifice*, which was themed around a woman's miserable life in Republican China, and *Brother and Sister*, which promoted developing children's independence in the new China, appeared to be apolitical. In this respect the selection indicated an ideological concession from the PRC perspective.

In the 1960s the CFD branch in Prague and the SFC in Hong Kong made many suggestions for film productions and selection to gain access to the film markets of their target countries. To increase the export of PRC films to these countries, the Prague branch delegated an officer, Senlin Long, to conduct field research on the film markets of Denmark, Sweden, Norway and Finland between 21 March and 31 May 1962. To achieve a positive reception in these countries, the research report suggested not recommending PRC films with anti-(American) imperialist, anti-religious, or strong class-struggle sentiments, since it viewed these countries as being essentially pro-USA and anti-PRC, despite their claims to be neutral. Instead the report suggested providing a less politicized version of the narratives of selected films, producing a small number of films specifically for film export, pricing the distribution

**31** 'Zhongguo dianying gongzuozhe daibiaotuan canjia fenlan "zhongguo dianying jie" gongzuo zongjie baogao' (A summary report of 'China Film Festival' in Finland by the PRC film workers delegation), 28 February 1957, B177-3-121, SA.

**32** Yan Xia, 'Wei dianying shiye de jixu dayuejin er fendou' (Fighting for the film industry's Great Leap Forward), B177-3-200-1, SA.



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rights as low as £250 to £500 per film, and translating and subtitling the films in English to alleviate the importers' economic concerns. This last point is important, because the expensive fees for translation and subtitling in these countries often influenced local distributors' film choices, and the English language had currency for circulation among the intellectuals there.[33]

Some suggestions must have influenced the PRC's domestic film production and selection. The SFC's experience demonstrated that Hong Kong film censors always banned scenes featuring Chinese leaders, political rallies and national flags, whether nationalist in Taiwan films or communist in mainland films. The resulting deletions often harmed the completeness and coherence of the film's story. To navigate censorship in Hong Kong and Southeast Asian countries, in 1958 the Shanghai Film Administration suggested that local film companies avoid trouble by shooting special overseas versions of scenes of this nature. *Wutai jiemei*/*Two Stage Sisters* (1964) is a story about two poor Yue opera actresses from the same troupe in 1940s Shanghai: one, Yuehong, is characterized as succumbing to bourgeois affluence and ends up a victim of their manipulation and abandonment; the other, Chunhua, is portrayed as being devoted to social commitment, and ultimately becomes a revolutionary opera performer under the influence of her progressive friends. In 1963 the vice minister of the MOC and director of the Film Department, Huangmei Chen, advised the production company to make two versions of the ending for this film, one for domestic distribution and the other for overseas. He suggested that the ending of the international version should avoid touching on intensive class struggle and be revised such that Yuehong does not commit suicide and still has hope for the future.[34]

Several socialist countries and a few non-socialist countries and regions – notably Hong Kong, Macau and Singapore, which had predominantly Chinese populations – imported PRC titles in decent numbers. Other target countries often imported only one or very few titles each time. In 1960, for example, the top five importers were North Vietnam with 29 titles, North Korea with 20, Macao with 15, Cambodia and Burma with 13 each, and Hong Kong and Indonesia in fifth place with 12 titles each. The countries that featured the lowest number of imports from the PRC were Sweden, West Germany, Switzerland, Australia, France, New Zealand and Belgium, with one title each.[35] The PRC exported 28 film titles to Indonesia in 1961 and 25 titles in 1962, while Burma received around 20 or 21 titles in 1961. According to Yan Xia, out of the films screened in rural areas of North Vietnam during this period, between 70% and 80% were imported PRC films, while PRC-produced films amounted to between 30% and 40% of all those screened in North Korea during that time.[36]

In terms of the spectrum of the distributed film titles, PRC film flows to socialist and non-socialist countries through export were not very different. Taking 1959 and 1960 as examples, in 1960 the PRC exported

**33** CFD Prague, 'Guanyu pai longsenlin tongzhi chuchai helan, nuowei, danmai, ruidian, fenlan kaizhan yewu huodong de qingkuang huibao' (A report on Long Senlin's business trip to Netherlands, Norway, Denmark, Sweden and Finland), 17 July 1962, B177-3-349, SA.

**34** Huangmei Chen, 'Chen buzhang fayan jilu' (Record of Minister Chen's speech), 1 November 1963, B177-1-21-99, SA.

**35** PRC Film Administration, 'Zhongguo yingpian shuchu qingkuang (1960)' (On PRC film exportation in 1960), January 1961, B177-3-265-3-6, SA.

**36** Yan Xia, 'Minister Yan Xia's speech'.



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99 film copies to socialist countries and 168 film copies to capitalist countries. Among the list of a total of 65 exported titles, most were sanctioned for export to capitalist and socialist countries. Although the 1960 PRC film export data shows no export of PRC film titles numbered 40 to 65 (from that list) to socialist countries, it signifies a time gap rather than a different treatment. Some titles, such as *Nülan wuhao*/*Woman Basketball Player No. 5* (1957), *Muqin*/*Mother* (1956), *Fengzheng*/*A Magic Kite* (1958) and *Lin Zexu* (1959), had been released in socialist countries before 1960. Only a few films were exported to socialist countries and not to capitalist countries; among these, the PRC sanctioned a few due to their highly politicized themes, whereas others might have been refused by the target capitalist countries due to a lack of market confidence and political censorship. For example, *Wanzi qianhong zongshi chun*/*Spring Forever* (1959), themed around Shanghai housewives' participation in social production activities as a response to government exhortation during the Great Leap Forward (1958–62), was only exported to socialist countries in 1960.[37] Yngne Bning, the manager of the Swedish film company Tellue, saw no possibility of releasing *Spring Forever* in Sweden because its plot was not vivid enough and its theme not acceptable to local audiences. *Wuduo Jinhua*/*Five Golden Flowers* (1959) was approved for export to both socialist and capitalist countries in 1960: Bning cancelled his original plans to distribute it, because the plot and context were considered too complicated and unfamiliar for local viewers, and the reception was not anticipated to be positive.[38]

Irrespective of whether their target was socialist or non-socialist countries, the spectrum of film titles designated for export was equally subject to the flux of domestic politics. In 1964 the MOC prescribed the wide export of *Monkey King* (1961, 1964)[39] and *Kongque gongzhu*/*Peacock Princess* (1963) to both socialist and capitalist countries.[40] On 13 June 1964, the CFD required the producer of Shanghai Animation Film Studio to translate *Peacock Princess* into English, French and Spanish, and to expedite translation for the forthcoming PRC film weeks held in Asian, African and Latin American countries that year.[41] In the latter half of 1964, however, the political context changed, escalating throughout the Cultural Revolution (1966–76). After receiving education on the Revolution, Shanghai Animation Film Studio re-examined the two films and asked the MOC to revoke their export, fearing that they might cause unfavourable international political influence. The studio believed the PRC should export animation films of a socialist nature that reflected China's new era with updated, more progressive principles. Through the new lens of the cultural revolution, the studio viewed *Monkey King* as lacking in educational significance and likely to result in negative outcomes, claiming the monkey king's rebellions against authority were motivated by his private interests rather than the emancipation of the people.[42] The studio also criticized *Peacock Princess*, alleging that it narrated a stereotypical royal drama, extolled the ruling class, and

**37** PRC Film Administration, 'On PRC film exportation in 1960, January 1961', B177-3-265-3-6, SA.

**38** PRC Film Administration, 'Zhongguo yingpian zai guowai yingchu qingkuang ji fanying' (On PRC films' reception abroad), January 1961, B177-3-265-28, SA.

**39** *The Monkey King* is adapted from one of the four great classic Chinese novels, entitled *Journey to the West*. The character of the monkey king, born from a strong magic stone, is a famous mythical figure in China. The film narrates how the monkey king battles with the Jade Emperor of Heaven and how the Emperor's efforts to subjugate him cause uproar and havoc.

**40** *Peacock Princess* is based on a story from southern China. A young prince falls in love with a peacock princess; however, their marriage is foiled by a power-hungry man, who spreads rumours that the princess is an evil spirit, and persuades the king to kill her. With the help of the goddess of the lake, the prince eventually reunites with his wife in a peacock country in the sky.

**41** '(84) Ying li ding zi di860hao' (File No. 860), 13 June 1964, B177-3-516-21-22, SA.

**42** '(64) Hu mei ying chan zi di120hao' (File No. 120), 20 November 1964, B177-3-516-5, SA.



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promoted the bourgeois ideology of the supremacy of love.[43] Seemingly the Studio's critique and the CFD's subsequent cancellation of the film translation project were based on the view that the two original fantasy tales did not easily allow their filmmakers to sow revolutionary seeds. Yet the fate of these films, which were first labelled as progressive but later as 'poisonous', was directly related to the periodic shifts between the tightening and relaxing political climates within China.

In addition to film trade, the PRC in the Maoist era actively engaged with film festival institutions to present its films to the world. The non-commercial exhibition infrastructure of PRC films included international film festivals, PRC film weeks, and galas and events abroad, as well as film screenings in China to greet foreign guests. These events usually involved rituals, celebrations and flexible venues, and were generally structured by Cold War politics and attempts to overcome restrictions through the PRC's networking with foreign intermediaries, including local people, communist organizations, friendship associations and Overseas Chinese communities.

The creation and operation of international film festivals in the 1950s and 1960s were usually determined by the Cold War and international relations. A case in point was when Indonesia proposed the inclusion of the PRC and North Korea on the Southeast Asia Film Festival's committee in 1954; the proposal was rejected by other members, particularly Japan, Taiwan and South Korea, for violating its purpose to promote 'free Asia' culture and ideology. As Sangjoon Lee has documented, the emergence of the Federation of Motion Picture Producers in Asia (FPA, 1953–80) and its annual event, originally known as the Southeast Asia Film Festival (1954–56) and then renamed the Asian Film Festival (AFF, 1957–80), resulted from the USA's impulse to consolidate the anti-communist Asian bloc and control it through financial aid and cultural dominance.[44] The Asian-African Film Festival could be viewed as a resistance against the AFF, challenging the worldwide industrial and aesthetic domination of Hollywood films. The festival was established in 1958 as a celebration of the Non-Aligned Movement under the 1955 Bandung Conference agreements; after the communist takeover of the committee in 1964, the festival's agenda became anti-colonialist, anti-imperialist and anti-Hollywood.[45] In the 1964 AFF festival, the PRC film *Hongse niangzi jun*/*Red Detachment of Women* (1961), which a three-member Indonesian film delegation with a communist background watched and glorified as 'the best film' during their 1962 visit to Shanghai,[46] won third place at the Bandung Prize awards.

To the PRC, the international film festival circuit was a cultural battlefield in its struggle for visibility with adversarial powers. In a 1957 report, the MOC complained about its well-prepared plans falling through: it had to retreat from the Cannes Film Festival due to the French government's invitation of Taiwan, and PRC films were prohibited from entering the competition at the Venice International Film Festival. The

43 '1964nian 11yue 17ri baogao' (Report of 17 November 1964), B177-3-516-22, SA.

44 Sangjoon Lee, *Cinema and the Cultural Cold War: US Diplomacy and the Origins of the Asian Cinema Network* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2020), pp. 47–51, 62–65.

45 Olga Bobrowska, 'Seeking truth in facts: historicizing Chinese animation', in Franziska Bruckner, Nikica Gilic, Holger Lang, Daniel Suljic and Hrvoje Turkovic (eds), *Global Animation Theory: International Perspectives at Animafest Zagreb* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), p. 70.

46 '(62) hu wen hui zi di 107hao' (File No. 107), 7 August 1962, B177-1-326-73, SA.



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MOC attributed these frustrations to US sabotage through its pressuring of the French and Italian governments,[47] an allegation that did not appear to be groundless. From at least 1952, the PRC's intensive signing of cultural agreements with other countries garnered significant attention from the United States Information Service (USIS) in Hong Kong, a central spot for China Watching.[48] American embassies worldwide used the term 'cultural offensive' to describe the PRC's international cultural projects, including film delegations and events in nations other than Brother Countries. The US Department of State also required these embassies to forestall them whenever possible. In 1959 the USIS at Taipei helped to edit a Taiwan-produced feature film down to documentary length, to enable Taiwan to participate in the Cannes Film Festival. This project was intended to block any possible invitation from the festival organizers to the PRC.[49]

In addition, the PRC tended to juxtapose non-political films with political films, and feature films with documentaries, when programming an overseas film event. This kind of event, which might take the form of film reception, film week or festival, usually had a political agenda, such as establishing relations with target countries, facilitating the realization of certain political agendas, increasing national visibility or probing the local film market. Moreover, the PRC usually relied on local communist organizations or friendship associations to hold these film events, as they could negotiate and even circumvent local censorship or political limitations that were unfavourable to the PRC's interests. In Japan, for example, rigid local restrictions on the screenings of PRC films meant that the PRC resorted to exploiting personal relations with members of the Japan-Chinese Friendship Association and the Japanese Communist Party (JCP) in order to rent theatres. The JCP showed *Qingchun zhi ge*/*The Song of Youth* (1959) in many cities in 1960. The film is a revolutionary melodrama and an adaptation of a popular novel of the same title that was published in 1958. The story, set in Northern China in the 1930s, concerns a young girl, Daojing Lin, her sequential romantic relationships with three men, and the rise of her political consciousness through her eventual membership of the Chinese Communist Party (CCP); both strands of the story develop in tandem. Everywhere the film was screened, 'progressive' groups held discussion forums. In one such meeting, Japanese female college students met Fang Xie, who plays the central character, and told her about their identification with Lin's revolutionary life path.[50]

The timing of this screening could not have been better for the PRC, as the Japanese people's struggle against the Japanese–US Security Treaty and the Kishi government was at its peak. For the USA, the showing of this film was 'a calculated move for further agitation of the Japanese people' during this sensitive period. The USIS in Hong Kong reported it to the United States Information Agency, quoting sentences from an article by Nozaka Sanzo, the chairman of the JCP. Sanzo had written that 'the Japanese people, currently engaged in a relentless struggle against

47 MOC, 'Dianying fangmian waishi gongzuo 1957nian xiaojie ji 1958nian jihua' (A 1957 summary and 1958 plan of foreign affairs on films), 12 March 1958, B177-1-319-4, SA.

48 Enclosure I Despatch No. 1763 from Hong Kong: Hong Kong USIS Report on Exchange of Persons, 25 February 1952, RG 84, Entry UD 2689, Container 2, Folder Propaganda Research Project, NACP.

49 From USIS Taipei to USIA, 10 July 1959, RG 306, Entry P51, Box 43, Folder Country Planning Taipei FY 1960, NACP.

50 Yan Xia, 'Minister Yan Xia's speech'.



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the new Japanese-US imperialism, and the traitorous Japanese reactionary government, would certainly be encouraged and inspired by this film'.[51]

The PRC film events in socialist countries in the 1950s were institutionalized as diplomatic practice: film weeks were held mutually under signed friendship and cultural exchange contracts, and government officials from both sides often participated in the events. According to PRC statistics, the following PRC film weeks were held by some Brother Countries between 1956 and 1958: three events in the USSR, with 15 PRC films screened and a total attendance of 2,730,127; eight events in the seven European socialist countries, with 37 films screened and a total attendance of 1,993,562; and six events in North Korea, Vietnam and Mongolia, with 13 PRC films screened and a total attendance of 550,575. A PRC film exhibition week was held twice in other Asian and African countries, with nine PRC films and a total attendance of 1,060,579, and three times in other European countries, with 10 PRC films shown and a total attendance of 1,805,499.[52] The PRC also held reciprocal film weeks for these countries in China.

Although the PRC film events in non-socialist countries appeared to be less ritualized and grand, they also helped to form alliances with these intermediaries and to provide audiences with flexible access to PRC films, offering more choice than was available through commercial transactions. According to Thomas Chen, Australia began to import PRC films commercially in 1958 and non-commercially in 1952. Chen argues that the PRC films were non-commercially circulated by 'a surrogate infrastructure' composed of local communists, leftists, and PRC-friendly organizations and venues, and that this informal alliance 'bound various peoples and communities on the left at both the local and global level'.[53]

The PRC embassies worldwide institutionalized the film gala in the 1950s, using film screenings and propaganda pieces as a major mode of publicity, particularly for National Day celebrations. The categories of selected films usually included documentaries, feature films and newsreels. The 'truth-telling' apparatus of the documentary film and its monotonous narration of the PRC's political and social achievements were especially suited to the task of establishing the independent and prosperous image of New China desired by the PRC. Among the films shown for the 1950 National Day celebrations in PRC embassies, the majority were documentaries produced after the foundation of the PRC, including *Hongqi manjuan xifeng*/*Red Flags Wave in Winds from the West* (1950), *Da xinan kaige*/*Victory in Southwest China* (1950) and *Xin zhongguo de dansheng*/*The Birth of New China* (1949). Only one of this group of films, *Zhonghua ernü*/*Children of China* (1939), was produced before 1949. All documentary films shared a common mode of narration, conveying that under the CCP's leadership, the Chinese Liberation Army and other forces fought hard against American imperialists, corrupt KMT rulers and forces, and separatist ethnic forces, and that the new state of the PRC came into being accordingly. The mise-en-scene employed was

**51** From Robert J. Clarke, PAO, USIS, Hong Kong to USIA, 16 September 1960, Entry P44, Box 3, Folder Hong Kong-Incoming Telegrams, NACP.

**52** Literature and Arts Section, Propaganda Department of the CCP Shanghai Committee, On Cultural and Artistic Works, part II, August 1959, A22-2-779, SA.

**53** Thomas Chen, 'Surrogate infrastructure: the noncommercial circulation of Chinese Films in the early Cold War', *Comparative Literature Studies*, vol. 57, no. 3 (2020), pp. 398, 400, 405.



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slightly dated. The documentary *The Birth of New China* records the celebration of the foundation of the PRC on 1 October 1949. Most shots are silent, featuring background music from celebrations in Beijing, nationwide demonstrations, and celebrations by ethnic minorities, the army and the masses. A male voice-over and a few audio fragments from speeches by two top leaders are also included.

For the embassies' National Day celebrations in the Maoist era, the 1950s film programmes set the basic pattern: a combination of a documentary on the national celebrations at home, and feature films themed around how Chinese people's lives changed from hardship to prosperity after 1949 and the new era of Chinese people devoted themselves to socialist construction and collective production. With the improvement of artistic quality and technological competence in the 1950s, the programmed films handled the subject matter more subtly than before. Moreover, the embassies also held film screenings as a means of liaising with the government officials of host countries. In 1957, for example, the PRC Embassy in Finland twice held a film reception for *New Year Sacrifice*, and all the guests were high-level officials of the Finnish government.[54]

54 'A summary report of "China Film Festival" in Finland'.

To understand the PRC's passion for the film festival, we must first comprehend the contribution of this institution to both the nation's transnational cinematic flows and the reconfirmation of its international identity-building and domestic revolutionary ideology. In a 1958 official document, the MOC proudly stated that PRC films were acclaimed worldwide, winning awards at international film festivals. These awards were primarily limited to film festivals held in socialist countries: *New Year Sacrifice* won a special prize in the Tenth Karlovy Vary International Film Festival in Czechoslovakia; *Woman Basketball Player No.5* won the silver prize in the Sixth World Festival of Youth and Students in the USSR; and *Shenbi*/*The Magical Pen* (1955) won a prize at the Second Warsaw International Film Festival. After the release of PRC films in Egypt, Egyptian officials confirmed that the development path of the PRC film industry was an ideal strategy to follow.[55] By filtering out the 'free world', the MOC envisioned a topology of world cinema that naturally foregrounded a cinematic ecology likely to be friendly to the PRC, and in which PRC films, being self-defined as progressive, took a leading role. Moreover, interactions with film circles from a few socialist countries and Southeast Asian countries, such as North Vietnam, Indonesia and North Korea, validated the PRC's vision of the world film scene.

55 MOC, 'A 1957 summary and 1958 plan of foreign affairs on films'.

What is interesting is why and how the PRC positioned itself in the cinematic world topography in relation to the film festival, and what kind of internationalism it envisioned from such self-positioning and forging of transnational solidarity. In their 1962 visit, the three-member, communist Indonesian film delegation met Shanghai film industry members and discussed film topics, watched recently produced Chinese films, and visited local film companies. On 5 August 1962, the head of



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the delegation stated that it was difficult to release local 'progressive' films (that is, revolutionary or pro-communist films) in Indonesian theatres, as US film distributors would often sabotage them by screening American films featuring erotic content in neighbouring venues to lure away audiences. He praised the fact that the screening of PRC films in Indonesia vigorously contributed to the development of the Indonesian revolution and inspired those working in the Indonesian film industry to learn from PRC films. He also credited the direction of PRC film production for creating new films by combining 'the content of revolutionary realism and revolutionary romanticism' and 'the art form peculiar to the nation', and expected it to shoulder its 'international obligation'.[56]

The delegation head emphasized that as a practitioner of this style of direction, film director Jin Xie had already created his own style, although he saw some influence of Soviet film director Sergei Gerasimov (1906–85) on Xie's *Woman Basketball Player No. 5* and *Red Detachment of Women*.[57] The Indonesian delegation head viewed the spirit of internationalism from the screenings of PRC films in Indonesia as follows:

> These screenings make Indonesian audiences aware that socialist countries can produce great films [...] and also makes you [PRC filmmakers] conscious that your audiences are composed of not only the Chinese population but also progressive people worldwide. Your films' success is also to be our success; your filmic articulation of the beauty of class views will also work on our behalf.[58]

The perspective and narrative of the above records, written by two Shanghai bureaus, indicate the PRC's cinematic subjectivity-building and internationalist vision. These reports present the head of the delegation as harbouring not only anti-American imperialist sentiments but also a spirit of internationalism, both of which were part of the basic lens through which the PRC conceptualized the world in that period. In the very first report, comments about the delegation's head demonstrated Chinese self-confidence in its position of superiority in this film exchange. The head was deemed 'politically mature', 'often express[ed] his views with Mao's quotations', and 'speaks with words proper to [the PRC]'.[59] This report then complemented the delegation's three tasks, which were designated by a deputy director of the Indonesian Communist Party: to learn about Chinese leftist filmmakers' pre-1949 experience of struggles against the rule of the KMT; to discuss holding the third Asia-Africa Film Festival with the PRC; and to strengthen solidarity with PRC filmmakers and 'totally keep pace with the PRC side' in terms of its views on significant international affairs and the creation of literature and art.[60]

Although the PRC version of world cinema claimed to break away from Hollywood dominance and sideline USSR hegemony, it could hardly preclude a hierarchy and gradations in its form of

**56** Shanghai Film Administration (SFA); Shanghai Branch of PRC External Cultural Association (ECA), '(62) hu wen hui zi di 109hao' (File no. 109), 7 August 1962, B177-1-326-77, 78, SA.

**57** SFA; ECA, '(62) hu wen hui zi di 107hao' (File no. 107), 7 August 1962, B177-1-326-73, 74, SA.

**58** SFA; ECA, '(62) hu wen hui zi di 109hao' (File no. 109), 7 August 1962, B177-1-326-86, SA.

**59** SFA; ECA, '(62) hu wen hui zi di 106hao' (File no. 106), 6 August 1962, B177-1-326-70, SA.

**60** Ibid.



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internationalism. In this case, the Indonesian delegation's visit served not only as a justification of the domestic official cultural line of 'combining revolutionary realism and romanticism' promoted after 1958, but also offered international confirmation of the 'sophistication' of PRC cinema in terms of its ideology and aesthetics compared with Hollywood cinema, which was viewed as 'reactionary', and Soviet cinema, which had been obliterated by the split of the USSR and the PRC from 1960. The worldwide dominance of US 'reactionary' films in theatres was a rationale that justified the geographical outreach of PRC film distribution and its transnational cinematic alliances. In general, the film project served the international cultural identity-building of the new China and facilitated the PRC's agenda of gaining recognition from, and establishing relations with, other countries, along with the extension of its cultural influence from the local to the international cinematic stages.

The non-commercial exhibition infrastructure of the PRC's film festival institutions allows for a rethinking of film festivals in the context of world cinema. Film festivals originated with the pro-fascist Venice festival in 1932 and its counterpart, the Cannes festival, in 1939, and there are now over 3000 worldwide.[61] They have nevertheless, until recent years, received limited attention from scholars, who tend to conceptualize film festivals by linking a body of films with dynamism, diversity and creativity. This conceptualization often revolves around the primary axis of European film festivals in relation to Hollywood's global market distribution. Thomas Elsaesser interpreted the annual international film festival as a 'very European institution', which was invented in Europe and evolved into 'the increasingly globalized and interlocking "European" model of the festival circuit'.[62] He viewed world cinema as integral to the international film festival circuit, declaring that 'European art/auteur cinema (and by extension, World Cinema) has always defined itself against Hollywood on the basis of its greater realism'.[63] Film festivals have often been framed as 'beyond' Hollywood, if not in contrast to it, working to curate international art cinemas.[64] They have been referred to as one of the key institutions through which contemporary world cinema is circulated and understood,[65] a utopia where multiple tastes are licensed to co-exist peacefully,[66] 'a political intervention into the market monopoly' of Hollywood,[67] and 'a parliament of national cinemas, or cinematic NGOs'.[68] Conversely, Dina Iordanova casts doubt on the popular view of film festivals as a distribution network and also on the claim of their competitiveness against Hollywood, arguing that festivals create transitory exhibition venues without a regular supply chain, and function as parallel circuits without much interface.[69]

Including the discussion of PRC's film festival institutions in the context of world cinema seeks neither to turn world cinema into a concept encompassing all films and all historical stages, nor to reshape the concept through artificially highlighting films from the periphery of the West in order to neutralize the uneven geographical development of

**61** Nick Roddick, 'Coming to a server near you: the film festival in the age of digital reproduction', in Dina Iordanova (ed.), *The Film Festival Reader* (St Andrews: St Andrews Film Studies, 2013), p. 185.

**62** Viewing the European film festival circuit as an alternative to the Hollywood studio system, Elsaesser noted their similarity, constituting a global distribution network, and opposition in the festival circuit, which works as 'the symbolic agoras of a new democracy' or 'special kinds of public spheres, where mediatization and politicization for once have entered into a quite felicitous alliance'. Thomas Elsaesser, 'Film festival network, the new topographies of cinema in Europe', in Iordanova (ed.), *The Film Festival Reader*, pp. 71, 75, 80, 92.

**63** Thomas Elsaesser, 'World cinema: realism, evidence, presence', in Lúcia Nagib and Cecilia Mello (eds), *Realism and the Audiovisual Media* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), p. 3. For a challenge to Elsaesser's synthetic formula of world cinema as the binary of Hollywood or Europe versus the rest of world. see Lúcia Nagib, 'Realist cinema as world cinema', in Rob Stone, Paul Cooke, Stephanie Dennison and Alex Marlow-Mann (eds), *The Routledge Companion to World Cinema* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2018), p. 310.

**64** Bill Nichols, 'Global image consumption in the age of late capitalism', in Iordonova (ed.), *The Film Festival Reader*, p. 36

**65** Julian Stringer, 'Regarding film festivals: Introduction', in Iordonova (ed.), *The Film Festival Reader*, p. 62.

**66** Chris Fujiwara, 'On film festivals', in Iordonova (ed.), *The Film Festival Reader*, p. 220.

**67** B. Ruby Rich, 'Why do film festivals matter?', in Iordonova (ed.), *The Film Festival Reader*, p. 164.

**68** Elsaesser, 'Film festival network', p. 75.

**69** Dina Iordanova, 'The film festival circuit', in Iordonova (ed.), *The Film Festival Reader*, pp. 112, 113, 119, 123.



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world film cultures. Rather, the PRC's film festival institutions provide an alternative historical experience of engaging world film traffic beyond Hollywood and European models.

Although it is hard to pin down exactly the transnational reception of PRC films by either country or film, an overview of their reception as reported by the embassies in 1959 and 1960 provides clues to understanding the effects of the PRC's global film project. Common communist sentiment did not guarantee a shared aesthetic cinematic taste with the PRC. In 1959 the PRC curated a film week in many countries for the Tenth National Day celebrations. *Dang de nüer*/*Daughter of the Party* (1958), which was selected exclusively for Brother Countries, including the USSR, North Korea, North Vietnam, East Germany and Albania, was shown in their opening ceremonies and was reportedly well-received. *Laobing xinzhuan*/*New Story of an Old Soldier* (1959), on the other hand, which was considered the best film for domestic national celebration and was highly recommended to Brother Countries, was not. Another film, *Xingfu*/*Happiness* (1957), which was a foil to the film week programmes, was a success in Riga, in the Republic of Latvia, although the PRC viewed it as full of petty-bourgeois tastes, distorting and defaming the image of the Chinese working class.[70]

Ideological identification did not necessarily result in the meaning-making of PRC films among socialist target countries being in line with the intentions of their filmmakers and programmers. At the Fourth Leipzig International Documentary and Short Film Festival, held 11–19 November 1961, the animated film *Renshen wawa*/*The Ginseng Baby* (1961) received the honorary prize, and the PRC animation films were reviewed as 'having national characteristics, humanitarian content and educational significance'.[71] The term 'humanitarian', however, was critiqued as meaning 'backward' and 'counter-revolutionary' in Maoist China. This deviation from the PRC filmmakers' and programmers' intentions indicates a different interpretation of the idea of 'humanitarianism' itself. *The Ginseng Baby*, for example, plots a Chinese tale within a vague class-struggle framework. A small child, Huzi, is forced into a lifetime of labour for the landlord Guapi Hu, due to the alleged hereditary debts his parents owed to Hu, his grandparents owed to his parents, and so on. Huzi manages to overturn the debt with the help of a ginseng baby, a plant spirit whom Huzi had previously befriended. Despite this, the unscrupulous landlord fails to release Huzi, and schemes to follow him in order to capture the ginseng baby for himself. In the end, the landlord falls to his death from a cliff while pursuing the ginseng baby. Guapi Hu's name, literally 'the skinner Hu' or 'the flayer Hu', had ideological and political implications, recalling an infamous landlord character, Bapi Zhou (literally, 'the flayer Zhou'), from the red classic *Gao Yubao* (1955). Guapi Hu is characterized as being as greedy as Bapi Zhou, who mercilessly exploited his labourers. The film ends with the uprooting of the existing class hierarchy in a symbolic revolutionary overthrow of the ruling class. In this tale, the filmmakers transplanted the

**70** PRC Film Administration, 'Shi zhounian guoqing woguo dianying zai guowai yingchu qingkuang ji fanying zhier' (On PRC films' reception abroad – Part II), 1960, B177-3-197-1, SA.

**71** Cultural Section of the PRC Embassy in East Germany, 'Laibixi disijie guoji jilupian duanpian dianyingzhou qingkuang' (On the Fourth Leipzig International Documentary and Short Film Festival), 12 December 1961, B177-3-337-13, SA.



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ideology of class struggle to a moral denunciation of greed. In the mainstream discourse of the PRC at the time, the film's theme was anything but 'humanitarian', that term being used instead as a negative descriptor and defined as a western bourgeois ideology that was concerned with human nature and promoted universal love, in conflict with the communist theory of class struggle.

Among socialist countries, the spectrum of reception of the PRC films released was complicated and even polarized. A total of 10 PRC films and one PRC-French co-produced film (*The Magic of the Kite*) were released in Bulgaria in 1959; of these, the most popular was *Woman Basketball Player No. 5*, which was exhibited from February through to the end of the year, with a total audience of 444,500. The PRC embassy in Bulgaria presented the 1959 increase in the average number of attendees at PRC screenings – 62.6% more than in 1958 – as proof of Bulgarian audiences' rising interest in PRC films. Similarly, among a total of six PRC films and a co-produced film released in Hungary in 1959, the biggest audience was for *Woman Basketball Player No. 5*, with 348,445 attendees. *The Magic of the Kite*, with 26,259 attendees, ranked the lowest. The success of *Woman Basketball Player No. 5* might be related to its renaming as *Sports and Love*, which touched on two themes in line with Hungarian audiences' tastes. Some extracts from the local press show the political and propagandistic information that was delivered there:

> The film not only has a light-hearted style but also contains political content. The coach's past tragedy and present success demonstrate that only the new China can bring the Chinese people happiness. The excellent acting of Qiong Liu and Yi Qin makes sure the central characters are not stiff, formal and tasteless, but have flesh and blood, joy and sorrow [...] Although the director handled the plot well, the story moves at a bit of a sluggish pace. This might relate to the script itself.[72]

In accord with its re-titling as *Dark is Disappearing*, another film, *Jia/Family* (1957), was reviewed by a local newspaper as follows:

> This film makes the audiences understand old Chinese family life and habits and the thoughts of people in the past; the new generation, bound by feudal ethics, will certainly rise. The younger generation is bound to succeed, the old family will definitely collapse, and the light of civilization and human freedom will shine throughout China.[73]

The discourse of these local press reports is strikingly similar to the official propaganda, in terms of both tone and viewpoint. It is hard to say whether such a similarity resulted from one ideological system that both countries adopted, or because the PRC embassy only selected extracts from local articles with which they concurred. By contrast, among the total of eight PRC films released in Czechoslovakia in 1959, *Woman Basketball Player No. 5* had the lowest attendance rate at only 19.9%.

**72** PRC Film Administration, 'On PRC films' reception abroad, January 1961', B177-3-265-17, 21, SA.

**73** PRC Film Administration, 'On PRC films' reception abroad, January 1961', B177-3-265-18, SA.



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*Colourful Sword*, which Czechoslovakia produced by editing five PRC short films into one Chinese film, enjoyed the highest attendance rate at 51.7%, while *Lin Zexu* enjoyed a decent attendance rate of 37.9%, the *Skirmishes on the Border* had 31.9%, and *Haihun*/*Sea Soul* (1958) had 31%.[74] The low audience attendance for *Woman Basketball Player No. 5* in Czechoslovakia was extremely surprising, given its honour as a red model in China.

74 PRC Film Administration, 'On PRC films' reception abroad, January 1961', B177-3-265-15, SA.

The release of the PRC films in Poland, Romania and Yugoslavia appeared unsatisfactory to the PRC. In Romania the embassy regretted that PRC films were only welcomed among workers and peasants, and that the two released films were screened in second- and third-rate cinema halls for very brief periods. A manager of a Romanian film company had the general impression that PRC films were slow-paced, tasteless, and did not fit local audiences' sensibilities, although he positively viewed *White Haired Girl* and *Iron Window and Raging Fire* as having great political and educational significance. The films *Lin Zexu*, *Hong haizi*/*Red Child* (1958), *Woman Basketball Player No. 5* and *The Party's Daughter*, screened in other socialist countries in 1959, were scheduled for release in Romania in 1960. This lag in release time also indicates the difference in film markets among socialist countries. The PRC Film Administration reported that a Polish film periodical 'made a slanderous and offensive critique' of the PRC film *Iron Window and Raging Fire*, claiming it was hard on the eyes due to its formalism and childishness. The 14th issue of this magazine rated this film poorly. In Yugoslavia the circumstances were even worse, and the PRC provided no information on PRC film releases or festivals there. On 17 August 1960, *Reference News*, an official newspaper of the PRC that translated and republished articles by foreign news agencies, quoted criticism of the film *Nie Er* from a Yugoslavian newspaper, viewing it as an attack:

> The slightly fast rhythm, the excellent acting, and the colour shots altogether make us feel the delicate colours of this unfamiliar country. However, the film could not avoid repeating the problem of the slow-pace of Chinese films once again that certainly affects a bad result.[75]

75 PRC Film Administration, 'On PRC films' reception abroad, January 1961', B177-3-265-17, 20, 22, SA.

Among non-socialist countries, many film events proved to be even less fruitful for the PRC. In 1957 the Finland-PRC Association, a local organization with a communist background, held the first PRC film festival in a capitalist country. The PRC selected 10 titles, ranging from feature films and cartoons to nature and artist documentaries, and screened them for free in rented local cinemas during their non-business periods. Among these titles, the only feature film centred on contemporary PRC life, *Shuixiang de chuntian*/*Spring in the Marshes* (1955), was not well-received in Oulu, and the local press labelled it a propaganda film. Western audiences also had difficulty understanding the traditional Chinese opera films *Lianyin*/*Burning Seal* (1955) and *Tianxian pei*/*Marriage of the Fairy Princess* (1955), viewing them as anything *but* film. Other negative responses from audiences included



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complaints that the short films lacked plot, and that the slow rhythm and implicit beauty of the feature films demanded intense patience. The embassy and the PRC film delegation learned from this event that to make an overseas film festival successful required diversified programmes and high-quality films, re-edited as necessary.[76] Yet it disregarded the element of cultural and ethnic difference that caused the same Chinese opera film to receive no recognition in Finland but be well-received in areas with large Chinese populations, such as Hong Kong and Singapore.

Existing scholarship has often interpreted the Yue opera film *The Butterfly Lovers* as one of the most sophisticated and successful diplomatic weapons that the PRC used to promote itself worldwide in the mid 1950s. But little attention has been paid to viewers' geographical distribution and their different receptions at the time. The film was adapted from the classical Chinese folklore of a romantic tragedy, with which Chinese people are deeply and affectionately familiar. The PRC government approved the Yue opera film, as it interpreted the tragedy of a pair of lovers struggling for the freedom to marry against their parents' wishes as having a robust anti-federalist theme.[77] In 1954, PRC Prime Minister Enlai Zhou took a copy of this film to Geneva and screened it for foreign diplomats and journalists at the Geneva Conference, where it created a sensation. In the same year, the film ran for 173 days in Hong Kong, with gross ticket sales totalling HK$671,578.[78] Scholars often used this big box-office reception as proof of its success. The film achieved an audience of over 18 million throughout socialist countries, placing it fourth among exported films from 1949 to 1957. It had 1,930,017 attendees in non-socialist countries and areas, with Hong Kong (972,773) and Malaya (739,595) – two regions where there was a greater Chinese population familiar with the folklore and opera forms. Its audience numbers ranked it first among all the films exported to the non-socialist bloc.[79] The film was not well-received in Thailand: the SFC distributed the film to Bangkok, where three theatres simultaneously screened it in 1957, but it was reported that their average rates of attendance ranged from only 30% to 50%.[80]

Both socialist and capitalist European countries appear to have had difficulty drawing meaning from *The Butterfly Lovers*. In 1955 the Poland National Film Distribution Company selected this film for screening; considering local audiences' filmgoing habits, they asked the PRC to cut the film's length by 30%.[81] The PRC duly asked the film's director, Hu Sang, to make this modification without harming its artistic value and story theme. Sang proposed several scenes that might be cut, but confessed that it was impossible to avoid a negative effect on the film.[82] In June 1955 it was the first PRC film to be released in Paris since 1949. The local press even reviewed the work, with two reviews indicating their acceptance of the film by associating it with the great works of French literature and folklore. They associated the film's comedic and tragic scenes with the works of Alfred de Musset and

**76** 'A summary report of "China Film Festival" in Finland'.

**77** 'Guanyu waibin keneng wendao de jige wenti de jieda (zandinggao)' (Draft on answers to several questions probably raised by foreign guests), B177-3-171-9, SA.

**78** Dunle Xu, *Kenguang tuoying*, p. 223.

**79** Lanjun Xu, 'The lure of sadness: the fever of *Yueju* and *The Butterfly Lovers* in the Early PRC', *Asian Theatre Journal*, vol. 33, no. 1 (2016), pp. 104–29.

**80** Shen Zhu, 'Liangshanbo yu zhuyingtai mangu pengding ji' (A box-office failure of *The Butterfly Lovers* in Thailand), *Jinri shijie*, no. 120 (1957), p. 9.

**81** '(55) dian chang zi di232hao' (File No. 232), 31 March 1955, B177-3-60-11, SA.

**82** Hu Sang, 'Dui dianying liangzhu de shanjian yijian' (Suggestions on cutting *The Butterfly Lovers*), 1955, B177-3-60-12, 13, SA.



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*Romeo and Juliet*, the playful and implicit dialogue with the works of Voltaire, the intense humanity permeating the film with that of French folklore's *Tristan and Isolde*, and the character's delicate actions with the works of Molière.[83] To average western audiences, a Chinese local opera was so exotic and unfamiliar that to make sense of the work it must be made to resonate with their own culture. The distribution of the film in the 1950s elicited the full spectrum of receptions, indicating that cultural habits might matter more than ideological identification and political attitudes.

The non-political appearance of certain PRC films seemed to contribute to their popularity in the 1950s and 1960s among the target countries. Among the films that many embassies included in the PRC's film programmes, which were well-received in the host countries, was *Five Golden Flowers*. The film embedded a political theme commending socialist construction within a love story about the young people of the Bai ethnic group. It is a comedic musical set in the people's commune of the golden flower village in Yunnan. In the eyes of the target countries, the romantic colour and music of the film seemed to overshadow its political significance. One critic acclaimed the film by saying that the wistful charm of its Chinese verse and its poetic regard for rural life 'amply compensate for some rough edges in the script'.[84] It won the Best Director and Best Actress awards at the Second Asian and African Film Festival in Cairo in 1960, with some festival participants praising it for its beautiful landscapes and music, lack of political content, natural acting and high artistic quality. Reports from some PRC embassies also specified the popularity of this film in their host countries. In Kathmandu, Nepal, for example, the PRC embassy rented the largest cinema and held two film receptions in 1960: the first was held to entertain local government officials and celebrities, the second to entertain local peoples' organizations and lower-level government officials. The film programmes included *Five Golden Flowers* and a documentary, *The 10th Anniversary Celebration of the PRC's Foundation*. The embassy reported that the second reception created a sensation. Although the cinema added many temporary seats, hundreds of spectators demanded to watch the Chinese films and crowds occasionally rushed into the cinema, despite attempts by the police to control them. The embassy stated that many audiences viewed *Five Golden Flowers* as a poetic reflection of Chinese people's happy lives. During the showing of the film in a town near the Sudanese capital Khartoum, the audience sporadically broke into applause to show their appreciation for the plot, lyrics and music; after the screening, some audiences congratulated the embassy staff, and some gathered around the embassy's cars, applauding and chanting, 'China, good film; China, good film'.[85]

The PRC also presented this film to the Japan-PRC Friendship Association, which put on a trial exhibition in Japan. *Reference News* translated and republished an article from the 20 August 1960 edition of

**83** Film Art Compile and Translation Association (ed.), *Guoji dianying cankao xinwen* (International Film News Reference), no. 1, July 1955, B177-3-77, SA.

**84** Deh-Ta Hsiung, 'The Chinese cinema to-day', *The China Quarterly*, no. 4 (1960), p. 86.

**85** PRC Film Administration, 'On PRC films' reception abroad, January 1961', B177-3-265-31-33, SA.



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the Japanese newspaper *Yomiuri Shimbun*, which claimed the film had 'no ideological imposition and enforcement'. In this article, Chinese-born Japanese actress and singer Yoshiko (Shirley) Yamaguchi, who rose to stardom in China and resettled in Japan after World War II, appeared surprised at the sharp contrast between the old rural China of her memory, which was extraordinarily feudalistic and rife with bandits, and the new picture of the Yunnan mountains presented in the film. She observed that the young girls living there had awakened their consciousness, obtained the right to speech, and now marched towards a meaningful future. In India, local audiences generally believed the film's plot, colour and photographic technology, acting and music to be beautiful. Some Indian unionists thought that this film, unlike American ones, reflected people's passion for the construction of their motherland, as well as the beauty of some of the characters' inner worlds.[86] Although the embedded political theme of the Great Leap Forward might not have been delivered to these audiences as intended, its popularity certainly facilitated a process of national image-building that was favourable to the PRC.

It is worth noting that the international reception of PRC films presented here is derived mainly from reports by PRC embassies and CDF branches abroad, which include far more praise for the films than criticism. These reports also give clues to understanding the PRC's self-evaluation and self-positioning in the cinematic world. A case in point was the PRC film festival held by the British Film Institute from 23 August to 4 September 1960. The festival screened 12 feature films and 14 short films in London, with a total of 31 screenings, around 7300 attendees, and an average attendance rate of around 70%. Among the films presented, *Lin Zexu*, which dealt with the Opium War between China and the UK, had the top attendance rate, followed by *Fengbao*/*Storm* (1959) and *The Magic Lotus Lantern*. The PRC viewed the festival as successful in light of the attendance rate and audience reactions. According to *Reference News*, overseas Chinese nationals in London particularly welcomed this festival and claimed that these films allowed them to see the suffering of old and the happiness of new China.[87]

Deh-Ta Hsiung, an audience member at this festival, provided detailed reviews of most of the films that painted a very different picture from that presented by the Chinese embassies. Hsiung viewed *The Magic Lotus Lantern* as the most disappointing film, commenting that its music was too monotonous and its dances long and boring. The reviewer saw a significant improvement in *Storm*, when compared with previous films on similar subjects, but also pointed out its lack of freshness, the limitation of its subject matter, and the old-fashioned handling of its characters. Hsiung acclaimed *Five Golden Flowers* as 'an unexpected delight', but concluded that all of the films had 'a slightly dated look' by western standards and that not one of them was comparable to the Polish film *Kanal* or the Soviet film *The Cranes are Flying*.[88] However, in contemporary PRC official discourse, the two films from the Polish Film

**86** PRC Film Administration, 'On PRC films' reception abroad, January 1961', B177-3-265-23-25, SA.

**87** PRC Film Administration, 'On PRC films' reception abroad, January 1961', B177-3-265-29-30, SA.

**88** Deh-Ta Hsiung, 'The Chinese cinema to-day', pp. 82–87.



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School and Soviet Thaw cinema were classified as cinematic socialist 'revisionism' that went against the doctrine of cinematic socialist realism. Although both responses to the PRC films were published in the UK, the extracts in *Reference News* and the film review by Hsiung form a strong contrast: the former using the audiences' praise to legitimize the new state, the latter criticizing the social realism that used the film medium to promote political arguments, and prioritized subject matter over aesthetics and form. Moreover, the high number of viewers could be an indication of interest but no guarantee of a great reception. Criticism of artistic immaturity and technical problems, such as the poor setting of English subtitles, was also levied against some PRC films that attracted a large audience, possibly resulting from public curiosity, in Australia.[89]

**89** Chen, 'Surrogate infrastructure', p. 405.

The multi-faceted and fluid dimensions of PRC transnational film distribution between 1949 and 1966 that I have explored in this essay challenge standard Cold War dichotomies and conceptions, and the imagery of insular Maoist cultural subjectivity, that are still widely circulated in current scholarship. The PRC global film project provided a platform for the interface of domestic and international film scenarios, socialist and non-socialist film institutions, commercial exports and film festivals, and overseas Chinese and non-Chinese audiences. The topography of the film dispersal was unevenly formulated and featured international political divergences and convergences, networks of PRC agencies and local 'surrogate infrastructure', and economic considerations and cultural capital calculations, reflecting but not equating with regional geopolitics and the Cold War order. The change in the topography of film dispersal over time may be correlated with pressure from volatile interstate relations and shifting domestic politics. However, the multilateral relations of combined agents, including Chinese international film agencies and embassies, international stakeholders and foreign audiences, dictated the boundaries of film dissemination. Moreover, the PRC's decisions on which films to export and where to distribute them were also subject to domestic political movements and thought currents of the time. The tricky circumventions by the PRC, in terms of international market confidence and reception effects, might be more related to the cultural and less to the political and ideological spheres, more to the flux of the domestic film scene and less to that of international markets. All these forces maintained, shaped and reshaped the territorialization of PRC film dissemination and its topographical configuration.

The diverse spectrum of titles and complex scope of the reception of the film project also question concepts such as 'socialist cinema' and 'national cinema' in terms of ideas of antagonism, and difference in what people believed to be 'capitalist cinema' and 'world cinema'. The spectrum of reception of PRC films released in socialist countries was far more complicated and even more polarized than appears at first glance. Some common points of film appreciation did exist across socialist and non-socialist countries for films that had a non-political appearance.

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This makes justifying the denotation of films as having 'socialist' or 'capitalist' attributes difficult, given that the PRC reports barely presented any conformity in their accounts of the films' reception within the socialist camp, not to mention within the first, second or third worlds. Instead, the contours of PRC film distribution and reception transgressed, and even broke through, geopolitical boundaries and diplomatic impasses. Through distribution and exhibition beyond their own borders, PRC films entered world cinema, where they confirmed their identity by bearing the primary mark of national origin and creating an international audience community. The configuration of distribution boundaries territorialized the international identity of Chinese films through inclusion and exclusion. However, the engagement with the world added value and cultural capital to PRC films in the form of international festival awards, press coverage, window attractions and proper distribution, which could in turn contribute to the construction of the national identity of Chinese films at home. State and domestic journalism required the recognition of international festivals and the attention of foreign audiences to create an imagined national prestige and competence. This may be one of the reasons for great concerns and routine reports, such as those by Chinese international film enterprises and embassies, being sent back to the homeland.

The vision of the cinematic world that the PRC held more than 60 years ago is still entwined in the concept of world cinema,[90] and its prominence has risen in the last two decades, with new perspectives and dynamics. The PRC film project for international visibility engaged with cinematic world-mapping and cinematic identity-building within the frame of world cinema. These concepts involved at least two enmeshed visions of the PRC: in one, it imagined itself as one of the few core locations, countering Hollywood and sidelining Moscow; in another, it aimed to conceive, territorialize and lead a 'progressive' and world cinematic fortress, cemented by a political promise of emancipating global populations from the suppression of imperialism and colonialism. The PRC's version of world cinema, which placed itself at the centre, emanating progressive films, contradicts Dudley Andrew's notion of 'the federated phase' of world cinema history, which encompasses only Hollywood as the centre of quantity and North Atlantic film festivals as the centre of quality.[91] The paradigm shift from postcolonial studies to world cinema, as Rossen Djagalov points out, has become 'a reconciliation with a Western-centric perspective and abandonment of postcolonialism's political commitments'.[92] The PRC and its unique global positioning provides an alternative map for incorporation into the otherwise Eurocentric and art film-oriented, 'atlas of world cinema' proposed by Andrew.[93]

It is important to remember in this context that Hollywood films were banned from public screening in the PRC from the end of 1950, after the outbreak of the Korean War, and that Soviet Thaw cinema was only

**90** The concept of world cinema within film studies has gathered under its wide umbrella earlier categories and their insights, such as international art cinema, third world cinema, non-Hollywood film and non-English-language film. For an overview of the theory of world cinema, see Robert Stam, *World Literature, Transnational Cinema and Global Media* (Milton: Routledge, 2019), pp. 103–09.

**91** Dudley Andrew periodizes and delineates a history of world cinema in which the federated phase of world cinema extends from 1945 to the 1960s, and features the global flow of Hollywood films and the position of the artistic institution of film festivals against this dominance. Here, 'film festivals' only refer to Cannes, Venice, Locarno and Berlin – those festivals that became federated through their fostering of 'international humanism', 'cinematic modernism', 'cultural distinctiveness', and independence from commercial concerns. Dudley Andrew, 'Time zones and jetlag: the flows and phases of world cinema', in Natasa Ďurovičová and Kathleen E. Newman (eds), *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2009), pp. 70–71.

**92** Rossen Djagalov, *From Internationalism to Postcolonialism: Literature and Cinema Between the Second and the Third Worlds* (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2020), p. 21.

**93** Andrew, 'An atlas of world cinema', p. 10.



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minimally imported to the PRC for public exhibition, as were those films produced after the Sino-USSR split. The PRC consistently referred to Hollywood and Soviet Thaw films in negative terms, and set itself against them in the mainstream discourse, paradoxically rendering its own cinematic identity configuration and transnational project justification in relation to those absent from its screens. This dialectically conceived and mutually constitutive relation between the national and transnational provides a historical illumination of Jung-bong Choi's theoretical concept of 'mutually parasitic' relations, in which antagonists are 'tied, annexed and reciprocally held hostage together'.[94] This perspective helps to challenge the assumption of cinematic transnationalism as 'the new virtue term in film studies', guaranteeing an affirmation of 'a welcome demise of ideologically suspect nation-states' and their 'cinematic arrangements',[95] not to mention China's traditional linear model of national film history.

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**94** Jungbong Choi, 'Of transnational-Korean cinematrix', *Transnational Cinemas*, vol. 3, no. 1 (2012), p. 3.

**95** Mette Hjort, 'On the plurality of cinematic transnationalism', in Ďurovičová and Newman (eds), *World Cinemas*, p. 14.

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